

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CUBAN LIBERTY AND DEMOCRATIC SOLIDARITY [LIBERTAD] ACT OF 1995

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENTS

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a cloture vote occur tonight at 8:30 p.m. and that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the second cloture vote, if necessary, occur on Tuesday, October 17, 1995, at a time to be determined by the two leaders, and that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. ASHCROFT. Reserving the right to object, and I will not object. I would just like to say I had hoped to get a vote on my amendment, which is the pending business on the Cuba resolution, and I will do whatever I can, wherever I can, to get that amendment an opportunity for a vote, but I do not want to stand in the way of this important resolution. So I will not object at this time to this unanimous-consent request, but will be seeking to get a vote on it in the event that the cloture vote fails, or, in the event that the cloture vote succeeds, I will amend the next business or near next business of the Senate in order to get that vote. I do not object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there any other objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have listened to some of the debate on the Cuba resolution and, in a way, I almost think I am watching the U.S. Senate scripted by Monty Python. You would think that we have these two huge megacountries at war with each other, trying to see which one can get some kind of an advantage over the other. But the situation as it is involves the most powerful nation in history and an impoverished little island. I do not hold any brief for Mr. Castro and his brand of communism, nor do I hold any brief for the mistakes he has made in

his country that have caused suffering among his own people.

But when you hear in this debate suggestions that somehow United States security is at risk if we do not continue to punish Mr. Castro and the people of Cuba, that is ridiculous, Mr. President. It is a bit like the argument we heard about a decade ago that if the Soviet Union were able to have their supporters in Nicaragua, the next thing you know, they would be marching on Galveston, TX. It ignores the reality of the situation and ignores the fact that if they were foolish enough to do that, they would not get very far. The Texas National Guard is stronger than any Central American military force.

Here we have a situation where some are saying we should not even give Fidel Castro a visa to go to the United Nations, as if the United States would turn its back on its own treaty and legal obligations in that regard. Maybe at some point we should acknowledge the reality. The reality is that you have an aging Communist leader, whom time and history and economic realities have left behind, who must realize that himself, and who will not live forever—as none of us do—but a man who poses no threat to the United States ideologically, militarily, economically, or in any other way. But you have an awful lot of people on that little island who do not have medical needs met, nutritional needs met, and so many of their economic needs certainly are not met.

We have the rest of the world looking at the United States and saying, “What are they afraid of?” Our neighbor to the north, Canada, a country with whom we share the longest unguarded frontier in the world, has regular relations with Cuba. I can drive an hour from my home in Vermont to the airport in Montreal and get on a plane to Cuba. They are not threatened by it. But here, in the most powerful nation on Earth, I cannot do that. I would have to have all kinds of special exemptions made and State Department authorization, and on and on and on. You know, at some point, somebody is going to say that we are afraid of our own shadow. I do not think we are. We are too good and too powerful a nation for that.

Let us pay attention to the real foreign policy concerns of our country. Let us ask ourselves, should we not be spending far more time in reasserting the leadership we have not given NATO over the past 3, 4, or 5 years? Let us ask whether we should be doing more to support the emerging democracies of the world. Let us ask what we are doing to expand our markets abroad like the Japanese, Europeans, and others do, at a time when we have huge balance-of-payment deficits, which started about 8 years ago. Let us not continue this absurd obsession with the aging leader of a tiny little island that poses no threat to the United States.

It demeans what we stand for, and it impedes the development of closer rela-

tions between our two countries. It is by strengthening those ties, by enabling Americans to travel freely to Cuba and Cubans to come here, that we will eventually see democracy in Cuba, not by continuing to isolate Cuba as if the Cold War had never ended and the Soviet Union were still trying to put its missiles there. The times have changed, and it is time we changed with the times.

BIPARTISAN BUDGET SUMMIT NEEDED NOW

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this morning's headline reports that budget negotiations between the President and the Republican congressional leaders have broken down. Instead of working together, the leaders are slinging partisan arrows of blame at each other in today's papers. I think, because of that, it is all the more reason to have a bipartisan summit on the budget.

In fact, this is the third time in the last 2 months and the fourth time this year that I have called for a summit meeting between congressional leaders and the President to resolve their budget differences.

In my earlier speeches, my main concern has been to avoid the costly and unnecessary Government shutdown that some have predicted in the beginning of the fiscal year last week. Fortunately, the President and the Congress have avoided this disaster. We agreed to a continuing resolution that funds the Government for the next 6 weeks. I applaud the bipartisan cooperation displayed to reach this continuing resolution.

But I fear that the President and the Republican congressional leadership are now playing a more serious game of chicken—a high-stakes game over raising the debt limit.

The Government is fast approaching the \$4.9 trillion ceiling of Federal borrowing imposed by Congress in 1993. For the Government to keep paying its bills, Congress has to increase the debt limit. I think the deadline is about a month away on November 15, when the Government needs to borrow to meet \$25 billion in interest payments, payments due thousands of individuals, businesses, financial institutions, and pension funds that own Treasury securities.

The Republican leaders are now threatening to use the debt limit as a club to beat the President into submission over the budget. Already, 165 Republican Members of the House of Representatives have pledged to refuse to vote for raising the debt limit, unless the President agrees to what they say should be the budget. In 21 years here, I have not seen an action so irresponsible by either Democrats or Republicans. The Speaker of the House, NEWT GINGRICH, is not helping by going along with the ultimatum and saying, “I am with them. I do not intend to schedule the debt limit if they are not met.” It sounds almost like a child in a sandbox

throwing a tantrum, instead of somebody who leads a great institution and is a leader of a great national political party.

The Speaker says he will use this hard-line approach no matter what, declaring, "I do not care what the price is." Treasury Secretary Rubin responded that the President will not be blackmailed by the use of the debt limit as a negotiating level.

Well, I am one Vermonter who feels that issuing ultimatums is dumb and counterproductive. Raising the debt limit should not be a partisan issue. It is just too important.

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan got it right when he said: "The issue of default should not be on the table. To default for the first time in the history of this Nation is not something anyone should take in a tranquil manner."

In fact, such a default would have serious consequences, indeed.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, reflecting some of the feelings as Republican Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board recently warned:

Defaulting on payments have much graver economic consequences than failing to enact discretionary appropriations by the start of the fiscal year * * * even a temporary default—that is, a few days' delay in the Government's ability to meet its obligations—could have serious repercussions in the financial markets. Those repercussions include a permanent increase in Federal borrowing costs * * *.

It is foolish to risk increasing our Federal borrowing costs through a default.

Unfortunately, the United States carries close to a \$4.9 trillion debt burden and over 16 percent of our annual budget goes to interest payments on the Federal debt.

Interestingly enough, some of the same people who say that we will not honor this debt today are some of the same Members of Congress who strongly supported the President of their own party who, during the 1980's, tripled the national debt.

One analyst estimated that if the Government's interest rate had been just a 0.01 percentage point higher than the last year, the Government's annual borrowing costs would have increased by \$211 million. Those same people say they want a balanced budget are willing to throw away a chance to balance the budget by permanently jacking up the Government's interest costs.

That repercussion of default goes a lot further than just the Government's borrowing costs. It may make some nice political points back home to say, "We do not care; we will just shut down the Government, that mean, nasty old government. We do not need it anyway."

Well, they ought to also tell some of their constituents, if they are a homeowner looking for a mortgage, their mortgage rates will go up. If they are consumers shopping for a new car, the costs of that new car will go up. If they

are a small business that wanted to expand, wanted to increase their inventory, wanted to increase their equipment, they will pay more for the money to do that.

To crush the dreams of millions of Americans over this silly game of political poker is totally irresponsible. Some have even suggested that the Treasury Department play games with Government trust funds—including the Social Security trust fund, the Medicare trust fund—in order to postpone default. I believe that also is irresponsible.

Every day Treasury collects billions of dollars for these public trust funds for the payroll taxes. They invest the fund surpluses to pay beneficiaries later on. This year, the Social Security trust fund will run a surplus of \$481 billion. The Medicare trust fund will run a surplus of \$147 billion. Tapping into these funds allows the Treasury to avoid default, but cashing in the surpluses is morally and fiscally wrong.

We made a commitment to the American people to keep these funds in trust for future generations. Divesting the funds ignores the long-term investment needs to provide the baby-boom generation with Social Security and Medicare benefits in the years to come.

The Republican leadership and the President need to get together. The consequences of a Government default are just too serious to be held hostage by partisan politics. To protect our public trust funds, to keep the Government's and private sector's costs down, and maintain America's creditworthiness, we need a bipartisan budget summit now to avoid a debt limit crisis.

CELEBRATING THE "NEW" OLD NORTH END

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Burlington Vermont's Old North End does not look like the kind of community most people, even most Vermonters, envision when they think of Vermont. It is one of the State's most economically depressed neighborhoods, in a city which is the closest thing to urban you will find in Vermont. But the character of Vermonters, is as evident in the Old North End as it is in every corner of Vermont.

One year ago the residents of the Old North End requested designation as an enterprise community under President Clinton's new enterprise zone initiative. The State and city government, businesses, schools, nonprofit groups, and residents sat down together and came up with a plan to rebuild the Old North End.

I have never seen so many people, from such different backgrounds work so hard to fulfill their dream. That hard work paid off.

This weekend Vermont's only enterprise community celebrates the beginning of its revitalization and the launching of 70 strategies for renewal. I am honored to have been asked to participate in that celebration.

Today, the dream of a new Old North End is well on its way to becoming a reality. The foundations have already been built with the dedication and commitment of a great many people who have shown all of the best qualities Vermont has to offer. Congratulations are in order for every one of them. Let the celebration begin.

ON MEDICAID

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, far too often, in Washington, the human side of Federal programs are forgotten. This year's debate has been more concerned with the bottom line and tax cuts than how best to serve the people. In a recent column in the Burlington Free Press, Barbara Leitenberg put a face on what is at stake in the Medicaid debate. I ask unanimous consent that Ms. Leitenberg's article be printed in the RECORD for my Senate colleagues to read.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Burlington Free Press, Sept. 4, 1995]

SENIORS FEAR HOLES IN MEDICAID NET

(By Barbara Leitenberg)

"It's not a Contract with America; it's a contract with death," says Lyman Deavitt, 65, of Burlington, his blue eyes flashing in anger. "I'd like to meet Newt Gingrich one-on-one."

Deavitt is especially worried about congressional proposals to limit the growth of Medicaid, the ultimate safety net for health-care costs.

He suffers from insulin-dependent diabetes and resulting neuropathy in both legs, two hard-to-treat aneurysms, blood vessel and bowel blockages, cataracts, and infections in his one remaining kidney.

Because of surgery for cancer of the bladder, he must use a device that siphons his urine directly from his kidney to a pouch outside his body.

"I have no way to pay for these things," says Deavitt. "All I have is \$704 a month from Social Security. You can understand why I get on a rampage about those jerks in Washington."

Medicaid is a federal/state program, started in 1965, which provides medical and long-term care for people with very low incomes. In Vermont, that means no more than \$683 per month. \$741 in Chittenden County. A single person must have no more than \$2,000 in resources; a married couple, no more than \$3,000.

More than 82,000 Vermonters participate in Medicaid: Almost 45,000 are under 18; 28,000 are 18-64; and 9,500 are 65 and older. Medicaid pays for physician and hospital care, and some home health and personal care. It is the payer of last resort for care in nursing homes. Medicaid also has special programs in which people who do not quite meet its strict income and resource eligibility rules can get benefits when they face extraordinary health-care bills.

In its Budget Resolution, passed in June, Congress proposes to cut \$182 billion from Medicaid by the year 2002. This would be done by limiting the rate of increase from about 10 percent a year to just below 5 percent. Although Medicaid will still grow at this lower rate, programs will have to be cut because the lower rate does not account for general and medical care inflation and the growth in the eligible population.